

Eckhart Tolle - Waking Up to the Reality of Ones True Nature

[Speaker 1] (1:58 - 1:44:03)

If you've been to a talk or retreat before, you know that I often point out at this stage that you should check within to see if you are waiting for something to happen, waiting for the talk to start. What does that mean, waiting? It means there's a little bit of inner strain, a slight, very tiny inner stress that pulls you away from here and now.

Expressed facially, it could be like, and when you notice that, then you know something about your relationship with the present moment. You lost it. The end of the relationship.

Now, did he or she leave you, or did you leave him or her? He or she doesn't leave you, you left. The waiting is so subtle and so all-pervasive as one's normal state of consciousness that most people don't even know that they're in an almost continuous state of waiting.

That's how normal it is. Once you detect it in yourself, it's a slight tension, strain, stress. Sometimes there's a little bit of irritation mixed in, a thought mixed in.

Come on, let's get on with it. We only have a couple of hours this morning, come on. But if you notice it in yourself as a mental energy field, and even some emotion may go with it.

Irritation is an emotion. Thoughts go with it occasionally. The moment you notice it, something has arisen that is not part of that deeply conditioned mind pattern.

The seeing of it is not part of it. The seeing of it, and that's the seeing of any pattern in yourself, is not part of the pattern. And the seeing, the recognizing of it, requires you to be present, aware at this moment, awake.

So when you see a pattern in yourself, mental, emotional, conditioned, of course. Now the waiting is a collective pattern, almost everybody has that. There may be other patterns in you that you detect that are to do with your personal life.

It doesn't matter what it is, it could be the simplest thing. When you see a man with a beard and dark hair, you feel anxious, and then you realize that maybe he looks like your father, and you didn't have a good relationship with him. Any pattern, collective or personal, when you detect it, there's something more at that moment than that which you see.

There is the seeing of it. Before, the pattern absorbed your consciousness completely. You wear it, you become it.

You are the waiting, anxious, somewhat irritated person. There's no space around the irritation, around the stress of that moment. There's no space around it, you are in it.

And then suddenly you see it. And one could say it is a stepping back, perhaps the deeper meaning of retreat. Because you are retreating not only from the world that you usually move in, you have to retreat also from the world in your head.

You step back. And something arises that is not conditioned, and that is pure, simple, pure, miraculous consciousness, awareness, presence, whatever you want to call it. And that is the part in you that is not conditioned.

Everything else is conditioned. The seeing, that is an energy field, I'm using seeing metaphorically, it's not necessarily with your eyes. The noticing, the seeing, you may feel it, but there is the presence in which it is felt, which means suddenly there is space around that.

And so it could be anything that you notice in yourself. It could be compulsive behavior, this or that, compulsive reaction. Almost everything is compulsive.

Well, everything is compulsive when you are not there as the witnessing presence. Your entire movement of thought is compulsive. You can't stop, or you think you can't stop.

And the mind loves to tell you that you cannot stop, and make a problem out of that, which leads to further thinking. Why can't I stop my mind? What's wrong with me?

I've been doing meditation for years. And I still can't do it. There's no point in going on, is there?

And then you believe in every thought. There's no point in going on. I might as well chuck it all in.

And then suddenly you step back and you watch those thoughts. So this is the arising of something new in you. New in the sense that you hadn't noticed that dimension in yourself before.

It was there all along, waiting underneath all the conditioned mind movements. But you didn't know it was there. And suddenly it arises.

It kind of, at this time in the evolution of the planet and of humanity, that is pushing through from underneath all the conditioned collective stuff that people carry and identify with as themselves. Something else is pushing forward from deeper, a deeper dimension within you. It's almost like the eggshell needing to break.

Something wants to come out of there. And so there comes a time when the shell, which is really the shell of that egoic sense of self that consists of identification with thought, needs to break. There is an evolutionary impulse in the universe towards consciousness.

And that has been playing itself out on the planet for millions of years. Consciousness expressing itself in ever-changing forms. And through humans, consciousness now wants to come to a flowering that hasn't happened before, never on a large scale, only to a few isolated individuals.

And what humans did to them, well, either they ignored them completely, or they killed them, or they made them into gods to be worshipped. And those were only the few individuals in whom this came through almost prematurely, but they were necessary precursors of what was to come, a deeper change. Now, I'm not telling you, of course, to wait for some change to happen on the planet.

You know, there are many, many, many times in the history, groups of people have waited for the end or some drastic change. We are not waiting. I'm just pointing out that this gathering here is already part of this transformation, this flowering of consciousness.

And anybody who in a so-called future moment, which doesn't exist, listens to this, it will be in the now, nobody could ever listen to this anywhere else except in the now, is also part of that transformation of consciousness, because as you listen, something new arises. There is more here than the words. There is that which the words point to, which is here as an alive presence in you, an inner arising.

There's more here than the words. If there were only the words, it wouldn't be that much. So consciousness then wants to flower through the human form.

Whether it fully will do that on a large scale, we don't know yet. Although it is happening here, there's also the dysfunction of the old form, which is no longer working, similar to a caterpillar that comes to the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar. And the closer it comes to the end of its lifespan as a caterpillar, the more difficult it gets to continue to...

Suddenly the crawling doesn't work anymore. Things don't work anymore. The caterpillar existence becomes dysfunctional.

It was fine before, because something new is destined to emerge out of this thing that is bound by gravity, can't even lift itself up one inch. And now the evolutionary transformation, when it happens, is not a progressive thing of getting better and better at doing something in a certain way, but a complete leap to another dimension. So in the case of the caterpillar, it doesn't mean that he gets better at crawling, faster and faster.

No, that is left behind completely, and something emerges that is a different being. Suddenly something comes out of it, and it has the most beautiful wings, and it flies off, has almost no weight at all. It has completely transcended the gravity of the planet.

And in the case of humans, what does that mean? Humans have been immersed in thinking for thousands and thousands and hundreds of thousands of years. The arising of thought was a necessary stage in the evolution.

Of course, it had wonderful sides too, to be able to think and speak, which is connected with thinking, words, form words and concepts. And yet gradually, humans lost through that, became totally entangled in it, and they lost their connectedness with something deeper than thought. They perhaps once had it, a deep connection with life, not life of form, the formless one life that is the essence of who you are, the one formless life.

But that connection humans had in the way that everything natural still has that, but they didn't even know it. It was so natural, they couldn't imagine anything else. They had that deep connectedness in which there's no fear of death, because there's a deep knowing that there is no death, only the form dissolving.

The leaf, all the millions or billions of leaves that we see around us now are all dying. And there's such beauty in their death even. And they are not afraid of death, they just die beautifully.

So in humans, thought gradually captured their consciousness, so that their whole sense of self became entangled in thought. And then gradually thought itself became more dysfunctional. It created a dysfunctional world.

From the beginning of recorded history, if you read history and are alert, if you had just come here from another planet and you are reading human history for the first time, you can see that a large part of the human suffering, that is history, is inflicted on humans by other humans. All the wars and murder and cruelties, continuous warfare, except brief interludes, because they got exhausted for a while. And then the most dysfunctional century, the 20th.

A hundred million dead, killed by other humans. And this is a continuation, the 21st century. So on that level, the old continues.

The caterpillar is still trying to have its way. And it's getting more and more difficult. Similarly, we could compare it to the flowering of plants, this incredible beauty that has arisen on the planet through flowers.

Consciousness expressing itself through this ethereal form of flowers that humans have always recognized as very special. And all flowers have had a significance. Well, perhaps the first thing in humanity that was not utilitarian, that you couldn't really eat or do anything with it.

And yet they valued that beyond anything that they could do with it. Because deep down, in a very, very deep, distantly, they recognized perhaps beauty there for the first time, when the first human discovered beauty. Ah!

But flowers came much later than plants. There were 100 million or 200 million years of plants before the first flower ever opened. I'm told that was about 230 million years ago, the first flower opened on the planet.

But many millions of years before that, plants already covered the planet. Now plants, certain plants flowered, others chose not to flower. And perhaps it will be the same with humanity.

Perhaps only part of humanity will go through this inner shift and the other part will say, no, we're okay as we are. But it only requires part of humanity to go through this flowering for the entire energy field of the planet to be transformed. So what humans then are not doing is to continue perfecting the old way, the caterpillar trying to crawl faster and faster.

If we use this metaphor for humans, then that would mean humans develop the thinking mind more and more. This is what, of course, they've been trying to do. Let's analyze this, more and more analysis, more and more getting facts and thinking.

Okay, how can we solve the problems that we've got, seem to have a proliferation of problems on the planet. They seem to get more and more, I don't know. Let's get together and think and see how we can solve this and analyze this problem, cut it into bits and pieces.

This is what they do at universities. They cut the subject matters into tinier and tinier pieces. 100 or 200 years ago, it was more satisfying still to be engaged in intellectual endeavors because you had a wide field.

Everybody at university had a huge amount of knowledge. Even the scientists had great knowledge. They knew Latin and Greek and had knowledge of classical culture and everything.

And nowadays, they have knowledge of a tiny segment of their speciality. They can't afford to study anything else. So it's not all that interesting anymore.

You can write a PhD on the leaves of the tree, the leaf of the oak tree. It's this wonderful phenomenon, of course, the leaf, but to see it in isolation. So everything, the mind cuts it up and it doesn't solve anything.

Any solution that it comes up with creates more problems. Okay, now we'll invent a medicine to combat the side effects of this medicine. And then another one to combat the side effects.

So humanity has really come to the end of the road as far as one particular line of growth or development is concerned. And now the shift needs to happen and is happening to something entirely different, which means thinking will become no longer primary but secondary. You can still think beautifully, but you're no longer trapped in thought.

Something arises that is deeper than thought, and that is the butterfly. It's like

something suddenly emerging that's so different from what was there before. And some of you have already experienced that in yourself, that shift.

From there was once this anxious, depressed, whatever, angry, stressful little me. Something else has come and there's been an opening. And a spaciousness that wasn't there before, or was there, but had been obscured continuously.

That is the new. And it's from there that you see the old in you, which of course still has its momentum. It has its momentum both on the external level, when you see the news and read the newspapers, then you can see how strong the momentum of the dysfunctional consciousness in humanity still is.

And you can see it in yourself occasionally, that the old reactivity, the old reactions, or the waiting for the next thing, the denial of what is, in various ways of running away from the present moment, all these old movements also still periodically come as wave movements. And sometimes even the seeing is lost. Even in those in whom the new is already arising, sometimes they get lost totally in the old, deeply conditioned, collective, personal mind movement.

And wake up a few hours later, a few days later, you might even be lost a few weeks. I've heard of people who got lost for a whole year, and then they couldn't stand the suffering anymore, and finally, through the suffering, they got woken up again. It's like being in a nightmare, when it gets so bad that you can't stand it anymore, suddenly you go...

and realize that you're in a bed, a warm bed. And this is a very significant term, waking up. And of course it has been used for thousands of years in spiritual teachings.

Awaken. Because everybody knows what awakens means on one level, because everybody wakes up every morning out of sleep. And you know what that is.

So there's dream, sleep, and dream. And then they go... So it's used as a kind of metaphor to describe something that is similar to waking up from sleep.

But of course it's not that, because in spiritual terms, ordinary human consciousness is a kind of sleep also. To be identified completely with one's conditioned thinking and emotion, that movement, to be totally identified with that is a kind of dream. Conditioned.

And so most humans are still in it, but many, many more than ever before are now waking up out of that. But to see in yourself, to verify it in yourself that it is a kind of dream to be in that. Because, and it creates a certain reality that corresponds to your conditioning.

You interpret through the veil of this dream, through the old interpretations and

reactions, you interpret the events and people and situations around you. So everything, it gets incorporated into the dream world. So you see nothing then as it is, because you impose your dream on it.

Human beings that come into your life, situations that you are in, you don't see it as it is. You only see your story about it. And so, and then a moment comes when you wake up and you see the possibility of relating, of being and relating without the otherwise compulsive mental interpretations that you have.

Sometimes when we speak of allowing this moment to be as it is, which is the essential spiritual practice, people think what we are talking about is allowing their interpretation of this moment. They cannot distinguish between this moment and the way in which they interpret this moment, how they personalize it. So you could be sitting on a park bench and you may have heard this teaching that says allow this moment to be as it is.

And then you think, okay, I'm a former CEO of that company who lost his position due to evil people around him and then soon later was left by his wife. His children don't like him. So this man is saying, okay, this moment, what I need to accept is that my life is in ruins.

It's come to nothing. Here I sit penniless on this bench, 30 years of hard work, nothing to show for it. It's all gone.

So what I need to accept now is that my life is a complete mess and totally in ruins. That's a story. So the man is confusing a story with this moment and he is imposing a story on this moment.

That's one story. There are many other possible stories. The reality is always much more simple than the story.

The story is this bench, this energy field sitting here, sensing the aliveness in the inner body, the trees, the birds, the clouds, the air, the sound of the leaves in the wind, the aliveness of it all, vibrant, without needing to tell yourself anything, you sense that, you see it. This moment is the simplicity of sitting here on the park bench and watching the aliveness all around. What do you need to interpret?

You accept this moment as it is and then you put your hand in your pocket and you pull out two dollars. That's what I have here, two dollars. All right.

You accept that. What else can you do? That's what is.

So the whole story of ruined and all come to nothing and we're never going to make it anymore, all that mind movement is not really part, is not part of the simplicity of now. So don't confuse when we speak of accept what is don't confuse a story with the simplicity of what is. What is, is just this here, sense perceptions, feeling the inner body

and most importantly, something that's usually ignored, to be aware of, it's very hard to use words here, to be aware and as I speak, there's the possibility that this is now seen, experienced by you here.

As you sit here, what is the reality of this moment? You let go of the stories in your head about who you are or what your life is. That's your life situation, not your life.

That's past. So what's, and it's all a story. It's the story of me in the head that you tell yourself.

I'm not talking, if it's memories are fine, but to identify with memories, then you personalize, it becomes a me. Your memories become a self. What's the reality of this moment?

Here, sitting here, there are sense perceptions, auditory, the humming sound and the voice, visual sense perceptions of the room, the person sitting up here, other people in the room, the ceiling, the lights, sunlight coming in, flowers up here, and you can feel perhaps your inner body also, the aliveness that is there in your inner energy field. And underlying all that, even deeper than anything that you experience or notice at this moment, is the alert attention, the field of alert attention in which this seeing, this hearing, this sensing is happening. One could also call it a field of stillness.

There's a field, an alert stillness in which your sense perceptions happen. That alert stillness is always there. Otherwise, there would be nothing for anything to be.

There needs to be consciousness in which the experience or the thought or the perception happens. So that alert underlying field is consciousness itself. And it is a revolutionary thing for a human to become aware of that, but it is also very, very subtle.

It is not something that you can grasp. The mind will try to make it into some new object, and the danger, of course, is there when we talk about it. We make it into an object of consciousness because we put it into words.

We make a thought out of it, out of something that is far beyond thought. So the mind thinks there is something here to grasp and hang on to or to achieve or to hold, but there isn't. It is all-pervasive, the only real power in the universe, and at the same time, it is so subtle that most humans miss it entirely.

They don't know that dimension. They only know that which arises in consciousness. They know it, but they identify with it.

They react to it. What arises in your field of consciousness are sense perceptions, experiences, thoughts and emotions. Sense perceptions, experiences, things happen, situations, which is also really sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions.

And so they are identified with the objects that arise in consciousness, completely identified, never knowing that deeper level that is the very condition for the arising of anything comes out of that. And one could describe that as stillness. The word limits it somewhat, but it's a pointer.

So one could say there is in you the dimension of stillness. Has never not been there. Is not something that you need to acquire or achieve, that you could achieve in the future, in time.

If you're looking to the future to achieve that dimension, enlightenment, whatever you want to call it, if you look to the future to achieve that dimension, that very looking to the future prevents you from seeing that it's already the very essence of your being now. So many humans are looking to the future to look for fulfillment or enlightenment or liberation in whatever way, through a million dollars or through spiritual enlightenment. They look to the future for that.

And the moment you move away and look to the future for it as if it were something that you could get, from someone or through some experience, you've gone away from it. Mentally, you've gone into the old conditioned mind movement which is looking to the next thing. This is why I spoke yesterday of the vertical dimension that we are going into here.

So the dimension of stillness, let's for a moment use that pointer, and let's never get attached too much to one single pointer because then you make it into some kind of belief. And the concept satisfies you for a moment. And then you could even say, I believe in stillness.

You don't believe in stillness? You're wrong. And then somebody else says, No, no, it's presence, it's not stillness.

There is in you that already, the stillness underneath all the mental noise and the emotional fluctuations, there is that realm of the unconditioned pure awareness, pure consciousness. And that is, on the one hand, you could call it, it is the non-personal dimension of you. It is where you transcend the personal sense of self.

And then you might say, Ah, no, I don't want to lose myself. Ah, but what you hadn't realized is, you think that yourself is the story of yourself. But that is no more than thoughts.

If you look very deeply and closely into what you mean when you say, I don't want to lose myself. I can feel there is something precious here that I do not want to lose. And you think, that sense of something precious that I am, I cannot imagine that I am going to die.

The world, me dead, and the world without me, can't be. So there is something, one feels

there is something precious, and people, the fear of death comes, because people believe this is going to be lost. That sense of precious, if you look closely at what that really is, you see that it is something that has become mixed up with the story that you tell yourself about who you are.

About the name, the psychological form of me, all the things associated with that, the story of me, the beliefs. And something has become mixed up with that, and that is the sense of I, a deeper sense of beingness, that got mixed up with the story. And when you touch, even touch the realm of stillness in yourself, that is the deepest fulfillment that could be, and you realize who you truly are, is that, that is the essence of your sense of I, I, I am.

It has nothing to do with the story, it just got confused with the story. Sometimes people discover that whose story is destroyed by life. Life does something to you, that you cannot, the story becomes totally unbearable, everything collapses around you, so you cannot uphold the story anymore of me, as somebody who has done this or has done that, or has achieved that, it has all left you.

Maybe the body has become ill, is collapsing, things around you are collapsing, there is nothing left that you can claim anything about, make any claim about, possession, this or that, it is all gone. I don't know who I am anymore. Some people experience that realization in prison, when they are stripped of everything.

Everything has left them, the story has collapsed, I don't understand anything. Some people experience it when there is a usual, a sudden great disaster in their life. Suddenly, all their explanations don't work anymore, the way they had explained, they had all figured it all out, how the universe works, and my place in the universe, and the importance of my life, my work, what I have achieved and done.

And suddenly, your whole career suddenly crumbles, maybe something crumbles around you, and with it, that. And in the last moments of this physical form, suddenly all that leaves you, your story collapses at the same time as the world around you collapses, you might be on a sinking ship, or building collapsing, and at that moment, there is a corresponding inner collapse of the mental edifice of the story of me. And what is left, when that collapses, is what was always there, you touch the stillness, and you touch the deepest sense of being of I am.

That has nothing to do with your physical form or your psychological form of me. Nothing to do with form. And there is a moment of peace and stillness.

And many people who have touched death and survived miraculously, many tell the story of suddenly encountering a realm of great serenity and peace. All fear leaves them. And then they come back, and many of them have never feared death again, because they have already faced death.

And so death is when the structures crumble, not only around you, but the inner structures. One way is through disaster, and another way is through, the more gentle way, is through sitting here. And you have chosen that one.

Other people choose the disaster, and that works very well too. And even if there was only a moment before death comes and that is realized, that is the flowering. Your life has flowered.

Consciousness has flowered through this form and realized itself through this form. For the first time, well, not the very first, but on this planet, it's still a very rare phenomenon for this to happen. Consciousness, one could say, no, it is only a little, almost a parable, that consciousness itself is dreaming the dream of form and enjoying the dream.

The entire universe is. Look at the planet of the billions of life forms. Any form, whatever you could imagine, exists or has existed at some point as a life form.

Look at the oceans, how many incredible life forms live in the oceans alone. Every form that the wildest imagination could come up with, it will be somewhere in the ocean. The most, wow, this comes out of somebody's dream, maybe they're on acid.

So am I saying that the universe is on acid? Well, something like that. Because there is obviously some wild creation going on, some incredible dream of most gigantic proportions, and that's only in one ocean on one planet.

And then on land, millions of insects, different forms of different plants, and then on the level that you cannot see, the microorganisms, it's just unbelievable. And that's only one tiny planet of trillions, trillions, the vastness of the universe, and everywhere there is the game of form. What a gigantic dream.

But built into that dream, because what is in each human is a microcosmic version of the entire universe, so the awakening of humans is also the awakening of the universe, because you cannot separate the human from the entire universe. They need each other. They are totally one.

There would not even be a universe without the perceiving consciousness. The one consciousness that comes through humans creates the universe as perceived by humans. Other forms perceive a different universe.

It's all the same, and yet it's different. The one consciousness dreaming innumerable dreams. Impossible to understand.

But what we see when we look at humans, they are immersed in a kind of dream also, when you're totally in, totally identified with your reactions, and you play out the drama of your life in relationships, at work, and you go, oh, oh, oh. And you get elated. Oh, it's great, I made it.

And a few months later, you go down, you lost it again. Oh, it's a stage. All the world's a stage.

Shakespeare saw that. And all men and women are merely players. And this is the stuff that dreams are made on.

So humans can wake up out of that dreamlike existence that they are otherwise immersed in, where there is no sense of who they are apart from the script that they act out, the inner script. Complete identification. And then there's the possibility of awakening, becoming aware of that which underlies the script, without which there would be no script, there would be nothing.

There's a vast realm of still, aware presence from where you can see the dream world without being immersed in it. The body is still in it, but there is a seeing. You can see your own drama.

You can see yourself playing out your own script. And gradually, the awakening is, ah, something arises that is not part of the play of form, but that can see the play of form. And if that can arise in you, it means it is a universal movement.

So through you, the universe not only wants to experience this gigantic dream, there's something else built into the dream, and that is the need of the universe to awaken out of the dream. It loves that even more than the dream. And that is, so what we cannot even begin to conceive of the magnitude of what looks only like some people in a room, sitting, listening, speaking, that this is part of a much larger movement that's connected to even the most distant galaxy is part of something that is happening in the universe.

It is an event created by the one life that is the universe. So you think on a personal level, it's good to sit here because your life becomes lighter, free. So you feel a relief on a personal level, suffering, less and less suffering, clarity arising, stillness arising, a sense of connectedness, of beingness, a deeper sense of I, I.

But that is all a huge event of cosmic proportions. So the awakening is the awakening of the totality through this form. That is the purpose of your life, to be that.

So you align yourself with the larger purpose. The secondary purpose is whatever you do in your life, and you can bring the opening into anything that you do, almost anything. If you can't, you leave it.

Some things have to be left, and other things are fine. It happens wherever you are. So this is what we temporarily call stillness in you, becoming aware that that dimension is already there, coming to the end of identification with thinking, and realizing that you are more fully yourself when you do not think.

Without trying not to think, there are many here who already experience the state of

being free of thinking without even knowing it. You may be walking and looking at a tree and seeing the magnificence of that spectacle of the dying leaves and all their beauty, and you are perceiving that in and through stillness. And perhaps a minute later you might say something to a person next to you and say, isn't that wonderful?

And you may not realize that for a minute or ten seconds or five seconds you have looked at that, and there was a deep sense of response, of oneness even with it, but no interpretation. And then you notice something strange. Whenever you look at something for the first time, if you are very alert you will notice that, when you glance at something for the first time, whatever it is, your head shifts, your vision, your field of vision shifts, it goes, shhhh, and it is, here there is a lot of nature around here, it may be a tree, a flower, the sky, or it may be something man-made, whatever it is, but nature particularly is helpful in this practice at first.

You notice the first moment of looking at something, there is always a space of no thought. It may be one second. It may be two seconds.

Now most human beings are not aware of that, and with some human beings the space of no thought is so brief that they can't capture it, because immediately thought comes in after half a second. But there was half a second. There is always a space before thought can come in, there is a looking, a seeing, and with you that space will now become larger, and in many of you it is already quite spacious.

In other words, the spaciousness around your sense perceptions. So notice that it is already there, but as you become aware of it, the spaciousness grows around your sense perceptions. So, and now comes, this is a magnificent thing, it's a great mystery that in past ages people had to spend 25 years in a monastery to be told this.

The master would say, OK, you work with me for 20 years, and then ask me again that question. But now things are speeding up, we haven't got that much time, in a good sense, on the planet. We are running out of time, and that's wonderful.

It's shrinking. So when you see something, there is a sense perception, can you be aware both of what arises in your sense perception, what you are looking at, or it may be listening, and can you be aware of the awareness, which is the stillness, in which that sense perception happens. And that stillness, that awareness is, one could say, the space around it.

So there is a spacious field, and there is a sense perception. And you are not interpreting what you see for a while, there is no need. There is a deep knowing, but there is no interpretation.

There is not conceptual knowing, not that you have lost your ability to have concepts, but when you need them, they will be there. Words, concepts, thoughts. But you are no

longer compulsively trapped in concepts.

You are exiting, exiting a conceptualized reality. Oh, that is the awakening. You are stepping out of inhabiting a totally conceptualized universe, which is mental conditioning.

Everything is called something, interpreted, labeled, named, and so a great freedom arises of perceiving through the unconditioned consciousness. And this is, you are here to experience that, and to see that it is already, that movement is already happening in you, that freeing yourself from compulsive conceptualization is already happening. And it is happening when you look at a tree or a flower or another human being, and it enters your field of vision, and in that moment there is pure perception and no labeling it in any way.

Just a field of stillness. And it may be that it is only there for a few seconds, but see if you can capture that space, and that is not perhaps a very good way of saying it, because you cannot capture stillness. It is, see if you can be attentive, and see if you can notice that, and that noticing is vital, because as you notice the stillness in which your perception happens, the space or the stillness expands.

So as you perceive things, you are now inhabiting two dimensions. One is the dimension of form, which is all around you, continuously fluctuating, and they may be outer forms or they may be inner forms, as emotions, thoughts. And the other dimension is the dimension of the formless, consciousness, pure consciousness, pure awareness.

The other is the dimension of the object consciousness, things. So you inhabit the dimension of the manifested without being lost in it, because you also dwell in the unmanifested. You dwell in the realm of stillness.

And even if at first the spaces of stillness don't last for very long, it's good enough. Three seconds of looking at a flower with no thought is good enough. And as you become aware of, there's not only the flower, I'm naming it now, but the awareness is not the naming, you become aware of the flower, and you become aware of the field of awareness or the stillness.

And this looks like a dualistic thing, but it isn't. It only becomes dualistic when we speak about it. When I speak, when I speak about becoming aware of awareness, it looks like two things.

Aware of awareness. But that's only because we're using language, which has a subject and an object in a sentence. What is really happening is self-awareness.

You're becoming aware. Awareness is becoming aware of itself. So that is the dimension.

And it's hard to talk about that. And in a way, the author of the Tao Te Ching is right

when he says at the beginning of this book of wisdom, the Tao Te Ching, if you can speak about it, that's not it. The words have to be seen as for what they are, just pointers.

So this is a beautiful practice here. Walk around wherever you are. Sit, stand, lie, walk.

Be aware of yourself as the aware presence, as the stillness in which everything is seen and heard. And so you become like a little child. It's not for nothing that Jesus said, you must become as little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Now what he is pointing to, and he's not saying exactly that, it's always just an approximation. It does not mean you return to that state because there is only that quality that a little child has in whom the conceptual reality has not yet developed. And when that little child in whom the accumulation of words and concepts in the mind has not happened yet, that little child looks at the universe, and you sometimes can see it when you see a one-year-old, one and a half, before language takes possession of their minds, the way they look is thoughtless awareness.

And then they smile at you, there's the pure joy of being. And you can see that which shines through is magnificent. And then gradually the veil descends because the child is programmed to ask, the mind of the child is programmed to ask, Daddy, what's that?

And then Daddy says, that's a tree. And then the mind says, tree, tree. Next time the child sees a tree, that open, complete openness is no longer quite as open because then the child looks at the tree, and then the mind says, oh, tree!

And two years, three years later, the mind is already possessed with concepts. So when Jesus says that, it's pointing as little children, you walk around in that state of openness, of non-labeling, the state of original innocence, which replaces the dysfunction, the collective dysfunction of the human mind that we could call original sin. If we go beyond the habitual interpretations of sin, there's no doubt that there's a dysfunction in humanity.

Look at human history. That's why they talk of original sin. Sin means missing the target.

The original Greek word translated means missing the target. That's what sin means in the original. And in other words, you miss the point of your whole existence.

And if you miss the point of your whole existence, you suffer. And that eventually works too. It wakes you up eventually.

So it seems insignificant at first to the human mind to say you can look at something and notice whenever you first look at something that there's a moment of spacious presence before the mind comes in and calls it something. And if that can be sustained, not through effort, not through wanting, not through some kind of act of willpower, but if

that can be sustained simply by noticing that space of aware presence when it arises. And then even as a human being comes into your field of vision, walks in through the door, appears in front of you, you look and there's a moment of non-labeling.

Let's say somebody you have never met before comes and you look and there's not a single thought in your head for perhaps five seconds. But if you notice that, that in the first moment there's a field of awareness in which the perception happens before the labeling comes in, you may find that it expands and you could still be in the state of just looking a minute later. And you can even talk.

And every time a sentence has come to an end, you re-enter the state of spacious awareness. A word has been uttered and you're back in space. And then your words have a different quality too because now they come out of that dimension.

They have an aliveness. They will touch the other human being. What you say has the essence of that freshness of being, not the old stuff that otherwise is your mind.

A minute later after meeting a person, you tell them the old story of me. So what do you do for a living? Well, blah, blah, blah.

You can talk about that also and then step back knowing that's not who you are. So who are you? You are the stillness.

That's where your true sense of I am comes from, of beingness. So this is the opportunity as you sit here to be in that state. You don't really need to think as you sit here.

I certainly don't think as I speak. The words are heard. As they come out of the mouth, I hear them.

As you do. So there's nobody teaching anybody. Do I know more than you?

No, of course not. Probably less than most of you. What I know is the realm of stillness.

And that's not anybody's personal achievement because everybody has that as their essence. So what I know is your essence. That's why it's nice to sit with me because otherwise why would anybody come?

What you enjoy most is to be with yourself. But in the true sense, not the mind-made self, the deepest self. Now ultimately you don't have to go anywhere.

This is just a temporary stage in the evolution of humanity where you have to travel somewhere to be with yourself. Now some of you have traveled to India and perhaps you already know you don't have to go to India. And so Omega is a little closer.

And the next stage is you don't have to go to Omega. Sorry. Oh.

You may go for the enjoyment. I sometimes enjoy listening to spiritual teachers who may be using different words. And yet the truth is there.

And it's a wonderful, deep joy in hearing it in a slightly different form. When you meet a human being and don't label them, or if that is not yet possible, at least not for more than a few seconds, and then compulsive labels come into your mind, what you can do, however, is to recognize the labels that come into your mind as just that, without believing in them completely. Because the mind is the compulsion to interpret everybody and everything.

It does that to other human beings. You form judgments. You meet them and you look at them.

And the more you're identified with your mind, the quicker you are in your judgments of the other human being. You know them exactly. It might even be true occasionally.

You may have seen something that's actually there, but what you have seen and thought that this person is is some conditioning in the other person, not who that person is. Or you have completely imposed your own condition, perception on that person. But you can recognize any thought you have about a human being as just a thought and a perspective and one of many possible thoughts and not the ultimate truth.

So you recognize the relativity of your thinking. The relativity of your thinking. There's one spiritual teaching that works entirely with that.

It's a particular... Byron Katie has this teaching that whatever thought comes into your head about another person, about yourself, or about your situation, you look at the thought and you ask yourself, Can I really know that this is so? Can I really know that this is true?

And if you really look at the thought and you say, I can't really know that this is true, this thought that I have about this person or this situation. So it's a stepping, a continuous letting go of identification with thought. And then gradually the thought, the compulsive thoughts arise less and less.

And as the compulsive thoughts arise less and less, more space is there. That's why we are here, for the arising of space, stillness. And in many of you, it's already happening as you sit there.

But there are some, I can see or sense, a few, not many, fields of restless energy here and there. Or others go... You may want to try feeling your hands as you sit here.

Because you are restless, because your entire attention is still lodged in the head, in the mind. And the mind must feel either restless or anxious or totally bored sitting here. So if you cannot get out of that, the body really is the...

If you can, simply begin by feeling the inner energy field in your hands and that there is, yes, there is an aliveness there. You can feel that there is a hand, not externally, but internally. If you closed your eyes and somebody asked you, is your left hand still there?

For a moment, you would have to internally, so to speak, look for it. And then you would say, you would feel something. Yeah.

And then the question is, how do you know that it's still there? Because it's not touching anything, you're not moving it. And then, of course, you will know, because I can feel it.

I can feel this energy. That's how I know that the left hand is still there. Not a memory, that it was there when I last looked.

And then your answer comes from the memory. Yeah, it's still there. I saw it a minute ago.

And again, these things to the mind seem insignificant, but they are of tremendous significance to begin to inhabit the body, which takes you out of inhabiting the mind exclusively. If you can feel your left hand or your right hand, you can also feel other parts of the body. You have to just start somewhere that becomes the entry point into the body.

I'm speaking particularly to those, to all of you, but to those who are either bored out of their minds. Well, if you were bored out of your mind, you would be okay. But those who are still bored in their minds or are feeling restless and are thereby missing the essence of this gathering, get into your body.

Get in there. Feel the legs, the feet, the hands, the arms. So if you can feel one hand, you can feel the other hand simultaneously.

You feel them both at the same time. The feeling of hand. Feet.

You can feel both feet also as you feel your hands. Subtle at first. Some people feel almost like a tingling sensation.

Some people feel a warmth. And then can you feel the trunk of your body, the belly? Sometimes to feel the belly, the belly is very helpful to be in there.

Taking one deep breath or two or three deep breaths and following the breath with your attention and feel the belly or the abdomen. It's a more polite word. Feel the abdomen rising as you breathe in, into the belly.

And for a moment, there's a cessation. The belly is full and then breathe out. So breathing a few times into the deep, take the belly breath, which means you have to follow.

It's not just a practice, an external practice. The essence here is that you follow the breath with your attention and then you move into the belly. So the attention leaves the head and moves into the body.

So you breathe into the belly. And there you could say, this is the center of the body, around here, solar plexus also, but belly is a beautiful center. And once you've breathed in a few times into the belly, you can actually feel the energy field of the belly here and you rest there.

And from there radiates out energy into the rest of the body. Hara, the center, as the Japanese call it. So here, and you may notice then, when you look at not only the images of the Chinese fat Buddha with a huge belly, who laughs all the time because he has no problems left, toothless old man with a huge belly, whatever you say to him, come with your problems, he will laugh at you.

But you may also notice that the Indian Buddhas and other Southeast Asian Buddhas, most of them have a very slight protrusion in the belly region. So there's the belly, there's a little bit of slide, because they rest here. Their center of gravity is not in the head, as it is with modern humans, Western especially, but the whole world has become Western.

So the center of gravity is not in the head. The center of gravity is in the center of your physically perceived body, but it goes beyond body. So you rest there.

And so to sense that field of aliveness is beautiful. It takes you out of the head. Your attention moves down here.

You unite with the all-pervasive intelligence that is beyond the mind that inhabits your body, that is only an expression of the one intelligence. It's the intelligence that lives in your body as the life energy that regulates thousands of complicated functions, complicated from the point of view of the human mind, that regulates, coordinates thousands of functions in the body simultaneously. Everything is just right.

If one thing was slightly maladjusted, the body would die immediately. You would collapse. Temperature, heart rate, lung circulation, innumerable things that you could spend the next 5,000 years analyzing how the human body works, and you still wouldn't get to the end of it.

And that's only the outer body. So there's an intelligence at work that is vast. So if you can feel your body, that is an entry point into that vastness.

And the deeper you go, if you do it for yourself, you can do it with your eyes closed at first so that you become familiar with inhabiting the body and realize as you go deeper that it's not really about the body. It's about sensing that vast spaciousness that is here. Vast spaciousness.

So you enter the spaciousness through the body. And then everything comes to life. Once your body comes to life, and then you look around and open your eyes without losing the inner sense of body, then you feel everything is more alive suddenly.

It participates in that because you are not deadening it anymore with mental abstractions, concepts, labels. It has always been alive. You couldn't see it anymore, couldn't feel it anymore, sense it anymore.

So I recommend that each one of you spend some time going into nature and being perhaps with... choose something like a tree or a flower or a patch of ground or a landscape, maybe the lake, the little lake we have here, whatever, or a rock with moss growing on the rock. There are some trails here, beautiful moss growing over ancient rocks.

And just be there. Be with it. And as you look, feel the energy field of the inner body at the same time.

That makes it much easier to look without mental interference, to have a space of stillness as you look. So you are present within and without, and you look from there. The inner body becomes a root, that which roots you in the present moment, anchors you in the present moment, and takes you out of mind.

And if then mind starts working again, anything, if you are doing anything creative in your life, becomes still first. Before the act of creation, there needs to be stillness. Nothing creative can come out of the accumulations of the mind.

The mind can be an instrument to give something form, but the inspiration, the creative impulse, comes from a deeper level. It comes from the stillness, the presence. So go into the body and feel that.

You don't need to think anymore. And then you look, and then at some point a thought comes, or a creative movement comes. It may be dance, whatever.

It may be a word that you speak, words that come out of your mouth, but they come out of the stillness. So getting in touch with that is a simple and beautiful way of entering the realm of no thought. And then thought can operate beautifully and is not going to create problems as it usually does, because most of your life problems are created by thought.

Life only has challenges. The only place where a challenge can come is in the now. Apart from a challenge that comes in the now, there is no problem except in the head.

The power to face challenges is always there in the now. But you cannot face problems because they have no reality. Always use as the criterion to tell you whether your problems are real, or ask, what's the problem at this moment?

What can I do about it now? Nothing. I'm lying in bed.

It's four in the morning. Then go into the body. Okay.

Ah, it feels good to be alive. And I thought I had problems. At nine o'clock in the morning when you enter the office, you open the door and there sits this man who you were thinking about all night, who is creating problems for you.

And his mouth opens. Words come out of his mouth. And you bring an alert, aware presence to it.

And you look and listen. And then words come out of your mouth. They won't be reactive anymore.

There will be a response, not an old reaction. And the words will be true. They will be just right for that moment.

And they're not rehearsed. Or no words come. You may look at him and walk out.

Nobody can predict. Right action. Buddhism sometimes talks of right action, right speech, right this, right that.

I've forgotten the list. I can't remember things. But those things, they come out of right presence.

You have to be present. Otherwise you cannot manufacture or try to bring about right words, right speech, right actions. Okay, I'm trying very hard here to say the right thing.

I'm trying hard to do the right thing. It's not working. You can't try to do the right thing because the right thing comes out of a particular state of consciousness.

Spontaneity, intuition, realization comes out of stillness. So in this shift, thinking loses its capacity to make you unhappy. Thoughts for a while still arise, but they're not that overpowering anymore.

You're not totally in them anymore. And then space arises. The ability to not think arises when there is nothing much to think about, when life would be far more joyful if we are not interpreting this moment.

And if you live in alignment with this moment, a lot of the time, you're better off not interpreting this moment. Let it be. It is.

And out of that state, necessary action comes. One doesn't. If it's not necessary, it doesn't.

So the evolutionary and revolutionary shift in human consciousness is to enter that dimension where compulsive thinking comes to an end. Compulsive thinking comes to

an end to transcend thought and realize that you are more fully yourself and more intelligent when you are not thinking. And when thought then comes in, should it be needed, it will be more effective, more powerful, more creative.

So you are here to be able to learn to enter that realm of great power, the realm of pure awareness. And it's not just the words that are pointing to it here. As you said, it arises because that realm itself is here in the energy field of this gathering.

And it is very helpful, even if your mind is saying, OK, I'm not really getting this. Of course it's not really getting it. The mind cannot get the essence of it.

So the most helpful thing about this gathering is the energy field of stillness or presence that works, comes from within you, but is also here in this field. That's the essence. And that's what works most powerfully, that transforms you.

The words are additional helps, additional pointers, and also to keep you entertained while you sit there in the energy field. So practice, practice again is the wrong word because it implies some kind of effort almost, but it is effortless, but pure seeing, pure listening, become aware. Whenever you look at something, at first there is a space before thinking happens.

As you become aware of the space, you may find that it expands. What that means in relationship to other humans, we will look at, if you can relate to other human beings, what it does to human relationships. I suggest just for a little while you stay here when this body has moved away.

Just stay until you feel the impulse to get up. Just stay for a little while in this energy field, in the stillness, and see that the body on this chair here is not really needed. That's enough what's there.